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INFORMATION NOTE

from : the General Secretariat of the Council

to : the K.4 Committee

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Subject: **EU-USA/Canada co-operation in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs**
- Troika meeting on ministerial level with USA/Canada in Luxembourg on 21 June 1994

1. The meeting

The above mentioned meeting was held following the Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting which was the last Council meeting under Greek Presidency. All participants underlined the usefulness of such half-yearly meetings on ministerial level. At the same time, they stressed the need for contacts on other levels between the European Union and USA/Canada, contacts which could be a useful complement to the already existing bilateral contacts organized, for example, between the German Federal Criminal Police and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

2. US/Canadian initiatives

a) Papers on Russian and East European organized crime [1]

- The US delegation distributed a paper on "East European and Russian organized crime". This paper concentrates especially on motor fuel excise tax fraud, money laundering, drug trafficking, violent acts and trafficking in nuclear materials.

  Several important steps were taken : the Attorney General of the United States, through her Organized Crime Council, has declared Russian/East European organized crime to be one of the top priorities of the national organized crime programme. Liaison arrangements have been established between law enforcement agencies to share intelligence, techniques and training : the new FBI's Legal Attache Office in Moscow will be opened in June 1994 ; there are annual meetings of a working group of officials from the FBI and the German Federal Criminal Police.

- The Canadian delegation distributed a paper on "Russian organized crime in Canada", which gives information on the threat to Canada, the international connections, the links between Russian and Colombian organized crime groups (cocaine trade), and the complications in investigating Russian organized crime.

  Canada and Russia signed a Memorandum of Understanding on law enforcement co-operation. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police has established an East European organized crime task force, which will establish contacts with similar groups in other countries in order to develop joint strategies.

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(1) These papers have been circulated to the members of the Working Party on Drugs and Organized Crime.

b) Suggestions

- The Canadian delegation suggested a meeting of experts to review current advice and assistance to Central and East European countries and the former Soviet Union, in the fields of law enforcement, judicial co-operation, customs and migration.

- The US delegation suggested a list of specific initiatives it would like to undertake in co-operation with its European allies :

  = the creation of a database of intelligence on Russian and East European organized crime groups, which would make information available to the law enforcement personnel of the US, Germany, Russia and other European and Eurasian authorities. The database would be administered by a committee of law enforcement and intelligence officials from the affected countries ;

  = the establishment of a permanent working group on Russian and East European organized crime, which would consist of high-ranking law enforcement officials from the nations most directly affected by the problem and from nations seeking to avoid having the problem gain a foothold in their territory. The group would meet at least annually, with subcommittees meeting more often, to exchange ideas for new legislation, and to set up programmes such as cross-training and assistance with linguistic and cultural matters ;

  = an annual conference on Russian and East European organized crime, that would bring together intelligence and law enforcement officials from the entire range of Western nations to bring each other up to date on the progress that has been made, and the steps that need to be considered for future progress, against the various manifestations of this variety of organized crime.

3. **Prospects for further cooperation**

The Troika recalled that the Council, at its meeting on 20 June 1994, had an exchange of views on "Relations with third countries under Title VI of the TEU" and had charged the Permanent Representatives Committee, assisted by the K.4 Committee, to continue the examination of this item. The US/Canadian suggestions for technical co-operation and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters to find effective international solutions to international crime will be part of that examination by the Council and an answer will be given as soon as possible.

The Troika agreed that there is a need for basic information exchange on new laws. Progress on Europol was recalled and it was recognized that the European Union is not yet ready for operational co-operation. The President emphasized, however, that the good bilateral co-operation should be intensified and completed by multilateral co-operation. Finally, the delegations were informed that at the next informal Justice and Home Affairs ministerial meeting in Berlin on 7/8 September 1994, the problem of East European crime will be discussed with the East European countries.